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February 9, 2012

WASHINGTON – Congressman Charles F. Bass (NH-02) and five of his Republican colleagues today urged House Leadership to remove the funding provisions in the transportation reauthorization bill concerning exploration and development of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR). The transportation reauthorization bill is expected to be considered on the House floor next week.

Bass said:

"I have long supported protecting our nation's sensitive and unique natural resources like the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and have also supported safe and responsible drilling to ensure we are utilizing our domestic resources and reducing the need for foreign energy sources. Yet opening ANWR to drilling as a means to pay for the transportation bill is neither reasonable nor realistic.

"There's no question that our nation needs a responsible, effective plan to reauthorize important transportation and infrastructure projects, which are vital to strengthening our economy and ensuring the safety of our highways. But given the complexity and necessity of passing such an important measure, it makes more sense to leave out a contentious provision to open ANWR to drilling, which poses significant fiscal and environmental challenges. I urge Leadership to remove this provision and instead work with Members to find alternate sources of funding so we can move this transportation bill forward."

The text of [the letter Bass and his colleagues sent to House Leadership](#) follows:

February 9, 2012

Dear Speaker Boehner, Leader Cantor, Chairman Mica, and Chairman Hastings:

We write to express concern with exploration and development of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR) as a partial funding offset for the long-term surface transportation reauthorization bill.

Successfully passing a long-term transportation reauthorization bill that is fiscally responsible and provides the states the necessary resources to plan and invest in America's future is a goal we all share. We agree that it is imperative for Congress to pass a long-term reauthorization bill that is paid for in order to provide stability for our nation's highway and infrastructure projects. In writing you today, we do not want to negate the hard work that the members of the respective committees have put into crafting this legislation, and we appreciate that they have considered a wide array of potential funding sources and issues. However, opening ANWR for exploration and development raises serious questions from both a fiscal and environmental perspective; we believe that this measure can achieve broader support and better force Senate consideration if ANWR were removed.

The development of ANWR has been debated for more than 50 years, and current law explicitly prohibits oil and natural gas leasing in the Refuge. Given the challenges associated with the reopening of ANWR, we believe this transportation proposal will begin to merit greater support if the debate over funding mechanisms looks beyond future exploration.

We recognize the challenges you face in determining on how to best maintain our nation's roads and bridges and it is our hope that a long-term infrastructure bill moves through the Congress.

Sincerely,

Charles F. Bass (NH-02)  
David Reichert (WA-08)  
Robert J. Dold (IL-10)  
Mike Fitzpatrick (PA-08)  
Nan Hayworth (NY-19)  
Timothy V. Johnson (IL-15)

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